

Cavs Handle Raptors in Potential Playoff Preview

Written by {ga=samamico}

Wednesday, April 07 2010 4:22 AM -



Random thoughts from the Cavaliers' 113-101 victory over the visiting Toronto Raptors on Tuesday:

* I'm not sure why LeBron James played 35 minutes, but I am sure glad he did. Watching the Cavs without LeBron is like watching American Idol without that obnoxious Simon dude. Oh wait. Isn't that the case these days?

* More than that, the Cavs are just so good when James is directing the ball movement and doesn't need to score -- which always seems to be the case against defenseless teams like the Raptors. James had as many assists as field-goal attempts (13).

* For the night, the Cavs finished with a remarkable (and season-high 38) assists on 47 field goals. That means all but nine made baskets came immediately after a pass. That is almost unheard of in the NBA, It also means the Cavs displayed more balance than ever, and in a game they didn't even need to win.

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* I tried to keep myself from writing this, but I have to admit, things are going so well for the Cavs that I am in an utter state of panic. Part of it is in the Cleveland sports fan in me, part of it is ... well, I don't know what the other part is. I just know that I have never seen a Cavs team so talented, deep and cohesive this late in the year.

* In fact, the Cavs have been playing so well that it's easy to forget Shaquille O'Neal has been out with a thumb injury since Feb. 25.

* Anyway, back to the game. The moment involving Raptors star Chris Bosh was downright scary, and just goes to show you that things can change with a snap of the fingers. (Or in the case of Bosh, an accidental elbow to the face from Antawn Jamison.) It's one reason why I don't want to see much more of LeBron, or any of the starters, much more this season.

* In case you missed it, Bosh got injured less than three minutes into the game, while he Jamison fought for position underneath the basket. Blood gushed from Bosh's face, and he was quickly taken to the Cleveland Clinic. He had a CT scan that revealed a broken nose and facial fracture, and he remained in town overnight for further testing.

* The Raptors currently hold the No. 8 spot in the Eastern Conference playoff race, but are just one game ahead of Chicago. But things could change drastically if Bosh misses a couple games.

* Interestingly, the Cavs' next game just happens to be against the Bulls, Thursday on the road. So if the Cavs rest their starters in Chicago, well, let's just the Raptors probably won't exactly be thrilled.

* Speaking of the Raptors, Hedo Turkoglu got into it a little with a Cavs fan at halftime. You can read my take on the incident in my game recap for NBA.com.

<http://www.nba.com/games/20100406/TORCLE/gameinfo.html?ls=gt2hp0020901150?ls=iref> :n bahpt1

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* It was great to see Cavs guard Anthony Parker (18 points, season-highs of eight rebounds and six assists) make the most of his extra touches on offense. Parker is perhaps the most regular guy on the team, and when asked about his performance Tuesday, he just smiled and said, "It's about time."

* Parker benefited from the absence of Delonte West, who sat out with lower back spasms. (The Cavs said it was just a "precautionary" move, which is code for, "Nothing is really wrong with Delonte but why bother playing him in a game like this?") But it was more than that for Parker. He also moved without the ball, found open spots, and got the ball exactly where he needed it at exactly the right time.

* Not to be forgotten in the heroics of Parker, James (19 points, 13 assists) and Jamison (20 points) was the continued strong play of Mo Williams. All he did was compile what seemed like the quietest 14-point, 12-assist game in NBA history, giving the Cavs hope that he will truly be provide another threat in this year's playoffs.

* Anyone else notice that Daniel Gibson was the only Cav to not get in the game? Just wondering.

* What I don't like is the fact forwards Jamarion Moon and Leon Powe only played 2:49 each. It is impossible for Mike Brown to give everyone quality minutes, but these guys are certainly more worthy than three minutes. Right?

* More than that, I simply couldn't find anything else to complain about.

* With just four regular-season games left, the talk is LeBron and other regulars (Jamison, Williams, J.J. Hickson) will play a little in Chicago, then sit out Friday's home game against Indiana. The Cavs then play their final regular-season home game Sunday against Orlando, before closing out the season in Atlanta on Wednesday.

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* The speculation is the starters will play against Orlando, simply because the Cavs don't want to give Orlando a "mental edge" heading into the playoffs. Plus, the game will be televised on ABC, which likely won't be real thrilled if LeBron is goofing off on the bench in street clothes. But after witnessing what happened to Bosh, I'd just soon not see LeBron or most of the other starters until the games start to matter again.